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ABSTRACT

Described in this paper is a proposal concerning the responsibility of the California community colleges in providing remediation services and programs. The first part of the paper concerns the proposal itself. After a brief statement of the major issues under consideration, the conditions under which student success can be ensured in open access colleges are defined, stressing the need for mandatory assessment and placement in appropriate reading, writing, and mathematics courses; required enrollment in appropriate remedial courses the first semester of registration; specification of recommended competency skills levels for all courses; concurrent enrollment in college-level courses; support services; articulation activities with feeder high schools; and monitoring of student progress. Following this, the assumptions underlying the proposal are explained, including: (1) random self-placement of students into classes is not sound policy; (2) assessment, placement, and follow-up will increase the institution's ability to respond effectively to students; (3) assessment/placement is supported by students; and (4) campus-selected and locally normed tests reflect the specific needs of the communities served. The second part of the paper discusses three issues supporting the remediation proposal: the revision of academic standards in all segments of higher education; the scope of remediation; and constraints in determining a student's potential for success. (A 28-item bibliography is included.) (EJV)

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CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES AS PROVIDERS OF REMEDIATION

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LEARNING ASSESSMENT
RETENTION CONSORTIUM OF
THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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P R E F A C E

REVIEW OF CALIFORNIA MASTER PLAN FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

In the 1985 session, the Legislature passed three bills directed at reviewing the California Master Plan for Higher Education. Both the Joint Legislative Committee on the Review of the Master Plan and the Commission to Review the California Master Plan for Higher Education are giving first priority "to a reassessment of the community colleges' mission." A particular issue being addressed is "What should be the role of California community colleges in providing remediation in reading, writing and mathematics skills?"

REMEDIATION AT ALL LEVELS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Remediation is a reality in all segments of higher education. A majority of students do not have college level skills in reading, writing and mathematics. All of the California postsecondary educational institutions offer remediation in some form.

ACTIVITIES OF THE LEARNING, ASSESSMENT, RETENTION

CONSORTIUM OF THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

The Learning, Assessment, Retention Consortium (LARC) represents seventy-two colleges in six regions across the State. Since 1980, this

growing consortium has been working together to study and share information regarding assessment, appropriate placement, basic skills programs and services, and student follow-up. The Consortium has established a data base that describes trends and practices in assessment, remediation and retention. The annual LARC Program Guide provides descriptive data on student needs, program services, and identifies LARC members who are authorities in the field of assessment and remediation.

Because of the intensive work in the area of assessment, placement and remediation by the Learning, Assessment, Retention Consortium, this body provides the following proposal and the rationale supporting its position.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This proposal has been made possible by the combined efforts of community college individuals and organizations committed to providing opportunities for higher education to students who demonstrate success. The proposal committee based their recommendations on the December 1983 Board of Governors' Statewide Mission Statement, defining the responsibility of California Community Colleges "to provide open admission without regard to race, ethnic or national origin, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation or prior educational status or any other unreasonable basis for discrimination."

Those individuals offering primary advice and recommendations were: Mary Ann Cox, senior author (San Joaquin Delta), Dorothy Bray (Sacramento City), Mark Edelstein (Palomar), Ronn Farland (Chancellor's Office), Lynn Frady (Cuesta), Holy Gritsch de Cordova (Contra Costa), Peter Hirsch (California Association of Community Colleges), Valerie Rytholt (Sacramento City), Martha Kanter (Monterey), Barbara Mertes (Chabot, Livermore Valley Campus), Jonnah La Roche (Alan Hancock), Merrilee Lewis (San Joaquin Delta), Ann Maddox (Santa Monica), Bob Martincich (Contra Costa), Grace Mitchell (Cabrillo), Peter MacDougall (Santa Barbara), Susan Obler (Rio Honda), John Ruden (Los Rios District Office), Glenna Scheer (Los Angeles District Office), and Charles Synold (Sacramento City). Many comments and responses received from regional LARC committees throughout the State were included in this report.

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REMEDIATION PROPOSAL

I. ISSUE

WHAT SHOULD BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN PROVIDING REMEDIATION IN READING, WRITING, AND MATHEMATICS SKILLS NECESSARY TO SUCCEED IN DEGREE AND CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS?

"Institutional quality replacing institutional growth" is a key priority in postsecondary education today. California segments of higher education have tightened educational requirements and improved excellence in education. However, we are not improving education by limiting student access and opportunity for a growing population who need better skills in reading, writing and mathematics in order to be successful in college level curriculum. The central focus is on how to insure student success. The Community College Remediation Proposal, based on four key concepts, defines the conditions under which student success can be insured in an environment of open access to the community college.

II. COMMUNITY COLLEGE REMEDIATION PROPOSAL

The following recommendations outline the responsibility of California Community Colleges in providing remediation services and programs. These recommendations are based on four key concepts:

- 1) ALL STUDENTS SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO PUBLIC, POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION.
- 2) ACCESS SHOULD LEAD TO STUDENT SUCCESS.
- 3) RESOURCES SHOULD BE DIRECTED TOWARD STUDENTS WHO DEMONSTRATE SATISFACTORY STUDENT PROGRESS.
- 4) CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE THE PRIMARY POSTSECONDARY PROVIDER OF REMEDIAL EDUCATION IN A SETTING WHERE STUDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO A RANGE OF PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORT SERVICES.

Proposed Conditions for Remediation
at California Community Colleges

The following conditions for remediation highlight a system for insuring student success in degree and certificate programs offered at the community colleges.

THE COMMUNITY COLLEGES SHOULD OFFER THE FULL RANGE OF REMEDIATION, BUT WITH LIMITATIONS ON UNITS/TIME AS MEASURES OF STUDENT PROGRESS.

Proposed Conditions

- MANDATORY ASSESSMENT for all students based on campus selected and normed tests.
- MANDATORY PLACEMENT in appropriate reading, writing, and mathematics courses based upon student need.

- REQUIRED ENROLLMENT in appropriate remedial course(s) the first semester of registration in vocational and academic programs.
- RECOMMENDED COMPETENCY SKILL LEVEL specified in all academic and vocational courses.
- CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT in college level courses where students have the necessary skills to succeed.
- SUPPORT SERVICES including counseling, advising, tutoring, special services for disabled students, and financial aid.
- ARTICULATION ACTIVITIES with feeder high school districts.
- MONITORED STUDENT progress through a comprehensive college system of follow-up and evaluation:
 - Based on need, students should be permitted to complete as many as twenty-four semester units or thirty-six quarter units to raise their skill levels so that they may successfully enter and/or concurrently enroll in the Associate of Arts degree program and transfer level courses.
 - Students who fail to make satisfactory progress could be referred to supplementary options which may include the following:
 - Non-credit individualized contracts
 - community-based educational services
 - adult basic education programs
- LEARNING DISABILITY AND ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE students are not treated in this proposal.

III. ASSUMPTIONS UNDERLYING PROPOSAL

Underlying the proposal are ten basic assumptions related to assessment, placement, and remediation. The principles that make up the following assumptions flow from the fact that community colleges as open admissions institutions are attended by local populations of great diversity.

1. Random self-placement of students into classes is not sound policy. It is a wasteful, inefficient use of resources.

Support services and counseling assistance cannot be targeted effectively. A substantial number of students fail because of placing themselves at academic levels inappropriate to their present skill levels.

2. Assessment/Placement and the follow-up of student learning and progress will increase the institution's ability to respond more effectively to students. Specifically,

(a) students will be located in the areas of study in which the probability of success is increase, (b) support services can be targeted more effectively, increasing the efficiency of such services and (c) instructors will have clearer expectations regarding their teaching and can be more effective.

3. The Assessment/Placement Program is viewed by students as being supportive of them and in their best interests.

4. The Assessment/Placement Follow-up Program can be a means to "renew" the college's and the faculty's commitment to teaching. The major responsibility of the community colleges for teaching effectiveness needs to be pursued in a systematic way. The institution (Board members, administration, and faculty) need to focus on what skills students enter with, where they are placed, how they proceed and what teaching methods will be most effective.

5. Assessment/Placement/Follow-Up are major components of the institution's efforts to improve student success in college. Each of the elements of (a) assessment, (b) orientation, (c) advisement, (d) placement, (e) early warning of failure, (f) teaching and (g) evaluation must be part of a coordinated, institutionally based effort that integrates student services and instructional efforts for the benefit of the student.

It is critical that these elements be combined with broad based efforts to develop new approaches to effective teaching strategies. Assessment must reach in and involve the classroom instructor.

6. Given the diversity of students in the California Community Colleges, campus selected and locally normed tests reflect

the specific needs of the communities served. Present activities include that individual colleges continue to explore and collaborate on test information and to contribute to a common data base that describes trends and practices in assessment, remediation, retention, student learning outcomes, and program outcomes.

7. For an Assessment/Placement Program to be truly effective, it must have broad based support, i.e., the Board of Trustees, President, Deans, faculty and students.
8. There are additional costs associated with the development of an Assessment/Placement Follow-Up Program, (a) Costs, though moderate, will be required to provide for staff, tests, and scoring, (b) Developing adequate follow-up systems will impose additional costs for colleges.
9. Ongoing program evaluation is necessary to the success of an Assessment/Placement Program. (a) Ongoing review is necessary on the topics of test administration, scoring, predictive validity of the tests, faculty confidence in the program and costs. (b) Students and faculty should be involved in both affective and cognitive evaluation. That is, how do students and staff feel throughout and about the process? (affective) and does it work? (cognitive).

10. Assessment will not go away, nor should it. It is a transition from the past dichotomy of quality and access, and it is a key to the newer definitions of excellence that will focus on what students need to learn.

RELEVANT ISSUES SUPPORTING THE REMEDIATION PROPOSAL

Three issues underscore community college responses to the question addressing how student success can be insured.

- A. ACADEMIC STANDARDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION
- B. SCOPE OF REMEDIATION
- C. CONSTRAINTS IN DETERMINING A STUDENT'S POTENTIAL FOR SUCCESS

A. ACADEMIC STANDARDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Since 1981, all segments of higher education have revised their standards.

1. University of California

In June 1982, the Regents of the University of California system adopted admissions standards that:

- increased the entrance requirements for high school students from twelve to fifteen units in academic or college preparatory subjects, seven of which must be taken during the last two years of high school;
- increased mathematics requirements from two to three year (elementary algebra, geometry, and intermediate algebra);
- increased and defined required courses in social science, four years of English, and two years of foreign language.

2. California State University

The California State University system has taken two separate

major actions in establishing academic standards:

- The Trustees of the California State University system adopted a plan to phase in by 1986 admissions requirements include four years of college preparatory English and two years of college preparatory mathematics.
- In spring 1984, in a separate action, the CSU Trustees approved a document which proposed to reduce remediation by 75% by the year 1990 among regularly admissible students.

3. California Community College

The Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges has put in place several policies to strengthen academic standards, including:

- a new statewide grading policy requiring the issuance of a failing ("F") grade to indicate unsatisfactory progress rather than permitting the student to withdraw.
- a policy requiring students whose grade point average falls below 1.75 over three consecutive terms to be dismissed.
- a policy requiring defined minimum standard of competency in English and mathematics for graduation with the Associate of Arts degree.
- a May 1985 policy change to mandates to Title V regulations strengthened the Associate Degree by distinguishing credit courses applicable to the degree from those not applicable to the degree. One important effect of this regulation is to limit Associate of Arts degree appropriate courses in English to only one course, one level beneath the level of

English IA, and no mathematics courses beneath the level of elementary algebra.

B. SCOPE OF REMEDIATION

At the same time that all segments of higher education have adopted new policies to strengthen their programs, they have also more carefully defined the need for continued remediation.

1. Need for Remediation

The problem of necessary remediation for students entering higher education is serious:

a. National

- Hunter and Harman, authors of the Ford Foundation Study (1979), report that each year 30 million students drop out of high school, up to 35% of the adult population is not educationally functional or literate, and 20 million illiterate non high school, adult graduates will attempt to return to education.
- Roueche reports findings that "the average student entering community college reads somewhere between the eighth and ninth grade level - if he/she finished high school."
- Charles Walker's review of the need to provide remediation found that the literacy gap exists at all levels of education. Walker reported that according to McCabe and Skidmore, ". . . even at Harvard University large numbers of doctoral students require courses in

writing." Yale University's professor of history and former dean of the graduate school, Jarislov Pelikan, finds applicants to post-baccalaureate study at Yale increasingly deficient in the ability to write English well enough to meet the requirements of the humanities, the social, and the natural sciences.

- Trustees of the California State Universities and Colleges were recently presented a study indicating nearly one-fourth of graduates at the nineteen Cal State campuses have difficulty writing class papers and lab reports which clearly express a set of cohesive ideas. Cal State juniors and seniors are now required to take the Writing Proficiency Examination before bachelor's degrees are awarded.
- "Between 1968 and 1980, mean SAT scores of college-bound seniors nationally fell over 40 points on the verbal test and 26 points in mathematics. Scores of California students have largely paralleled this decline, although scores for freshmen entering the University of California, that is, the top 12.5 percent of the State's high school graduates declined more sharply still. Between 1968 and 1979, mean scores of UC entering freshmen declined 61 points on the verbal section and 30 points on the mathematics. Over these same years, however, UC-bound students still attained higher mean scores than students nationally or throughout the State."

- The National Center for Education Statistics 1985 article on "Many College Freshmen Take Remedial Courses" reports that in 1983-84, 25 percent of all college freshmen took one or more courses in remedial mathematics, 21 percent took remedial writing, and 16 percent took remedial reading.

b. California

- Promises to Keep reviews the decline of test scores on the SAT, ACT and TSWE, evidencing the continued need for remediation in all levels of California postsecondary education. "In 1981, the average score on the Scholastic Aptitude Test rose by two points on the verbal and three in mathematics, and California students exceeded the national average on both portions of the test. The average score of California students on the American College Test also inched upward from 19.0 in 1980 to 19.1 out of a total 36 points in 1981. In 1982, however, counter to the trend for college-bound seniors as a whole, SAT scores for California seniors declined from 426 to 425 on the verbal section and from 475 to 474 on the mathematics portion. California students now fall below the national average by one point on the verbal part of the test and remain seven points above the national average in mathematics. The California average on the TSWE also dropped. Whether the decline in scores is significant or skewed because

of the increase in students taking the test in California is debatable."

- The Learning, Assessment, Retention Consortium 1984 data show that in 33 of the 38 reporting colleges, over 50% of the students tested were not eligible for placement in English IA, college level composition courses. Also in 18 of the 25 reporting colleges, over half of the assessed students were not eligible for placement at or above intermediate algebra.

c. The Underprepared Student

The adult student needing remediation to successfully enter vocational or academic programs represents a long standing and continuing clientele in the community colleges. In his 1970 book, Against All Odds, Moore labels this new student as high risk, marginal, educationally disadvantaged and academically unsuccessful in the high school system. He points out that these students are diverse in their backgrounds. This student includes minorities, re-entry women, young adults needing training to increase their work opportunities, and older people retraining for changing technology in the job market. However, all these students are similar in their need for training in the basic skills.

In the report, "Excellence for Whom?," the Planning Committee for the Achievement Council compiles the

following data defining the academic needs of disadvantaged students:

- The average twelfth grade student's test scores on the Survey of Basic Skills decreased as the education level of parents decreases.
- There are significant differences between schools with concentrations of minorities and new populations, and other schools.
- There are significant differences between scores on the CTBS between white and minority students. "For example, in the Pasadena Unified School District, the median score for Whites was 69% on the CTBS reading test, 70% on the language test, and 62% on the math test. Whites outscored Blacks by 41 points, 35 points and 25 points. Hispanics fared somewhat better than Blacks in reading and math, but not in language.
- In 1983, Whites had a composite SAT score 135 points greater than that of Hispanics and 219 points greater than Blacks.
- The University of California study of the California high school graduating class of 1975 found that Black and Hispanic graduates met UC eligibility requirements at less than one-third the rate of Whites.
- In 1981-82 minority high school seniors were three times less likely to complete the course requirements for graduation than were other students. Impact of course requirements and proficiency tests on 1982 "non-high school graduation rates" were predicted to include 42

percent of the Blacks, 31 percent of the Hispanics and 22 percent of the White populations.

- The employment status, type of occupation, and income of adults is significantly affected by the level of education completed.

d. Remediation Preparation

The segments of public higher education in California must continue to provide remediation. Many of their students are not prepared to successfully enter the regular college curriculum. Yet, these same students are capable and have the commitment to be successful. They need to have strong reading, writing and mathematics skills to succeed.

Community colleges now serve all students who have a high school diploma or equivalent, or are eighteen years of age and can profit from the instruction.

Remediation "at the community college level" is essential. It is here adults use their motivation for vocational or transfer education in preparation for employment and leadership in society.

Adult students should not be placed in "separate, non-credit 'centers' in an educational environment where students cannot concurrently enroll in entry level vocational or transfer courses. Adults do not want to

learn to read, write or compute for the sake of learning particular skills. They want and need to make up deficiencies in one or more skill areas in order to be successful in other courses.

Under these circumstances, dramatic skill growth is possible. As often as not, this growth is supported and motivation is maintained by the opportunity to concurrently enroll in college level courses supported by necessary instruction in remedial courses.

2. Levels of Remediation in Higher Education

In Promises to Keep, the California Postsecondary Education Commission defines the continued need for remediation at all levels of higher education:

- "that the University of California and the California State University in the interim continue to offer or make available remedial activities in reading, writing, mathematics, and English as a Second Language to the degree determined by appropriate assessment. In the interest of better coordination and integration, each segment should examine the means by which its campuses offer remediation in reading, writing, mathematics, and English as a Second Language, in order to ensure maximum quality, responsiveness to student need, lowest cost, and least duplication."
- "that the University of California and the California State University explore cooperative arrangements with

institutions such as Community Colleges and adult schools to provide remedial activities in reading, writing, mathematics, and English as a Second Language."

- "that the California Community Colleges continue to be considered in the long term as the primary post-secondary provider of remedial courses and services in reading, writing, mathematics, and English as a Second Language in the State in addition to their academic, Vocational, and community service functions."

3. Community College Definition of Remediation

In the May 1985 California Community College Board of Governors' policy for "Actions Concerning Remediation," remediation is defined as "that process which is designed to assist students to attain those learning skills necessary to succeed in college transfer, certificate or degree courses and programs, and includes classroom instruction as well as other support service interventions to assist students in the pursuit of their educational goals and objectives."

4. Evaluation Findings on Remediation Services

Although community colleges are just beginning to implement evaluation and follow-up studies on student success in remedial programs, there are several studies that verify exceptional growth and retention. In particular, California Community College studies on remediation by Butte, City College of San

Francisco, San Joaquin Delta, and Santa Barbara Community Colleges, Sacramento City College and the Puente Project have findings supporting improve skills in reading, writing and mathematics resulting from verified programs. Overall, these studies report:

- The semester retention rate is as great for remedial students as it is for students enrolled in Associate Degree level transfer courses.
- Average skill growth in reading, writing and mathematics is, at minimum, twice that expected in a semester growth period, and can be as great as four times the expected skill growth in that period.
- After taking remedial courses, students report a major increase in self confidence needed to complete college programs.
- The majority of students enrolled in remedial programs are enrolled in an average of five to six additional units in non basic skills classes.
- Although based on small samples, it appears Black and Hispanic students have a greater completion and skill growth rate in remedial courses than do White students.

C. CONSTRAINTS IN DETERMINING A STUDENT'S POTENTIAL FOR SUCCESS

Using a test in reading, writing and mathematics skills for placement of students in appropriate courses must not be confused with using a "single test" to deny a student's opportunity for success in the community college by prohibiting his/her admission.

Recognizing the limitations of assessment instruments, achievement tests can be effective, valuable tools used for advising students on appropriate course placement. In this situation, appropriate placement has been shown to significantly increase the student's retention rate, skill growth, and grade point average.

However the use of a single test to prohibit a student's access to the community college through setting an academic floor has serious consequences. The criticism of the use of a single test to determine admission led to the discarding and discrediting of compulsory placement in most California community colleges in the early seventies. One of the most vehement protests and resulting studies and responses revolved around test bias for minority and disadvantaged students. The following examples of studies supports the concept that no single test has been designed to predict a student's success in college.

- Walling demonstrated that test jargon of "Edited American English" presented biased problems for minorities and disadvantaged.
- Studies by Sedlacek, Davis and Pedrini provided evidence that test scores were not useful, valid predictors of college success for Blacks.
- Hoffman attacked the standardized, objective achievement test for presenting defective questions and skewed statistics.
- Myer criticized the content and validity of standardized tests which test the "recognition of problems in the writing of

others."

- Kilpatrick provided evidence that the "strengths and weaknesses of a tested population cannot be determined by a single test.
- Rovezzi-Carroll and Thompson found that SAT scores were not effective in predicting college graduation, withdrawal, or academic dismissal among a group of 104 low-income students.

S U M M A R Y

It is the responsibility of the community colleges to provide remediation to prepare their students to succeed in degree and certificate programs. This responsibility is to people who must have opportunity for changing their economic and social status through postsecondary education.

Underprepared students are often minorities, the economically disadvantaged, and re-entry persons. These people are the people who have not always had equal opportunity to higher education. It is these same people who frequently drop out of secondary education. For many of these people, basic skill courses are not remedial. This is a first time exposure to new learning. This new learning only has meaning when the students can apply the reading, writing, and math skills to their degree and certificate programs.

It is society's responsibility to provide open access to opportunities provided only through postsecondary education. The monitoring of student success is a way of being responsible for student access. Through open access and student success, all of California benefits and profits.

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